

VZCZCXRO4706
OO RUEHBW RUEHPW
DE RUEHBUL #1297 1490922
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 280922Z MAY 08
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4125
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS KABUL 001297

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, PRM
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG
NSC FOR JWOOD
OSD FOR SHIVERS
CG CJTF-101, POLAD, JICCENT

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IR](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: Iran Encourages IROA to Employ Refugee Returnees

Ref: Kabul 579

¶1. (SBU) Iran and Afghanistan recently concluded a draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) that obliges the latter to accept set numbers of Afghan refugee graduates of Iranian universities into civil service employment (REFTEL). Iran's ostensible goal for the MOU is to encourage the return of refugees to Afghanistan. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) gave us a copy (salient points summarized below). UNHCR has declined an IROA request that it act as a third-party guarantor. Suspicious IROA officials are concerned the Iranian government may exploit the arrangement to increase its already considerable influence in Afghanistan; nevertheless, they acknowledge their country desperately needs educated human capital from whatever source.

¶2. (SBU) Begin summary of MOU's salient points (unofficial translation):

Introduction:

- Notes Iran has hosted large numbers of Afghan refugees, many of whom have attended Iranian universities.
- Asserts these educated Afghans could helpfully contribute to their country's reconstruction.
- Expresses hope that, as returnees, these educated Afghans will lay the foundation for "better friendship and sincerity" between Iran and Afghanistan.

Obligations of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

- Establish a "Human Requirements Database" that lists private sector and government ministries' employment needs; the database is to be accessible from employment centers.
- Institute a process by which Iranian educational credentials can be certified.
- Pay \$300/month salary for one year to 80 returnees.

Obligations of the Islamic Republic of Iran

- Give the IROA complete information on the Afghan graduates residing in Iran.
- Pay for the release of individual educational documents from Iranian universities (Comment: Apparently, Iranian university transcript fees can be prohibitively expensive.)
- Grant a one-year Iranian residence visa to the family members of

those Afghan graduates who choose to return to their homeland.
(Comment: This visa would allow the program participant time to find a job and prepare for his family's later return to Afghanistan.)
-- Give program participants one-year Iranian multiple entry visas.
-- Pay \$500/month salary for one year to 80 returnees and give them housing loans.

Obligations of the Iranian-Educated Afghan Returnees

-- Be prepared to work in Kabul or major provinces of Afghanistan.
-- Try to bring families back to Afghanistan from Iran within one year.

Obligations of the United Nations

-- Solicit financial support for the execution of the returnee program from the international community.

13. (SBU) Though UNHCR does not plan to sign the MOU, it supports the document's intent. UNHCR officials note, and their IRoA counterparts often complain, because Afghan refugee returnees educated in Pakistan often speak English, their services are denied the IRoA, which cannot compete against western embassies and NGOs' higher salaries. Since non-English-speaking Iranian university graduates are less competitive, they should be more readily available to the IRoA as prospective civil service hires.

WOOD